

Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 /068 W

----- 083397

R 290718Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2350

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PGOV MY

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN OFF ON VISIT TO JAKARTA

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 0499 (DTG 270942Z JAN 76)

1. GOM ANNOUNCED OFFICIALLY JAN 24 THAT PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN BIN ONN LEAVING TODAY (JAN 25) FOR BRIEF "INFORMAL" VISIT TO JAKARTA AT INVITATION OF PREXIDENT SUHARTO TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. FOREIGN MINISTER TENGKU AHMAD RITHAUDDEEN AND MFA SECRETARY GENERAL TAN SRI ZAITON IBRAHIM BIN AHMAD WILL ACCOMPANY PM ON TRIP. ANNOUNCEMENT INDICATED PRIME MINISTER WOULD RETURN TO MALAYSIA JAN 29.

2. COMMENT: BREVITY OF VISIT ENABLES GOM TO AVOID
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DILEMMA OF APPOINTING ACTING PRIME MINISTER

AT TIME WHEN POST OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
STILL UNFILLED. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, PRACTICE
IN PAST HAS BEEN FOR DEPUTY PM TO SERVE AS
ACTING PM WHEN PM LEAVES THE COUNTRY FOR
PERIOD LONGER THAN A DAY OR SO, AND, IF THE
DEPUTY PM IS FOR SOME REASON UNABLE TO DO SO
FOR THE SENIORMOST UMNO MEMBER OF THE
CABINET TO BE DESIGNATED TO SERVE IN THAT
CAPACITY. AT PRESENT AGRICULTURE MINISTER
GHAFAR BABA IS BOTH THE SENIORMOST CABINET
MINISTER AS WELL AS SENIOR UMNO VICE PRESIDENT
AND IN ORDINARY COURSE OF EVENTS WOULD BE
EXPECTED TO BE APPOINTED "ACTING" PM
IN HUSSEIN ONN'S ABSENCE. SINCE, HOWEVER,
GHAFAR BABA ALSO IS A LEADING CONTENDER FOR
DPM POSITION, HIS DESIGNATION COULD HAVE LED
TO AWKWARD SITUATION, ESPECIALLY IF, AS WE
BELIEVE, CHOICE OF SUCCESSOR TO HUSSEIN ONN
AS DPM NOT YET FINALIZED.
DILLON

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To: STATE
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